

MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT NETWORK SYSTEM



*Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC)
(Formerly Bureau of Health)
11 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011
Phone 1-800-821-5821 / Fax 207-287-7443*

****ADVISORY – Important Information****

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TO: All HAN Recipients

FROM: Dr. Sheila Pinette, Maine CDC Director
Dr. Stephen Sears, State Epidemiologist

SUBJECT: **Widespread Influenza Activity in Maine**

DATE: Wednesday, January 08, 2014

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PRIORITY: Normal

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Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC)

Widespread Influenza Activity in Maine

Summary: Influenza activity in Maine is widespread with laboratory confirmed influenza reported in all counties. Influenza A/pH1N1, Influenza A/H3, and influenza B have been confirmed in Maine indicating all three strains are circulating. Maine CDC has followed up on six outbreaks of influenza as of Tuesday, January 7th. Influenza vaccination is still strongly encouraged and is widely available, especially to protect those persons at risk of severe disease. The vaccine appears to be a good match to the circulating strains this year, and it is not too late to get vaccinated.

Background: Maine's first laboratory confirmed case of influenza was identified as influenza A/pH1N1 in the end of October, and pH1N1 remains the dominant strain so far this season. If pH1N1 virus continues to circulate widely, illness that disproportionately affects young and middle-aged adults may occur. Laboratory confirmed cases of influenza are steadily increasing, and Maine reported widespread activity (meaning increased influenza-like illness and laboratory confirmed influenza in at least half the regions of the state) to federal CDC for the week ending January 4th.

Information Call: Maine CDC will host an informative influenza conference call on Tuesday, January 14, 2014 from 2-3 pm. The intent of this call is to provide an update on surveillance, and discuss clinical recommendations. The call is aimed towards healthcare providers, laboratories, and health care facilities. Lines may be limited so if multiple people from one location intend to call in, please call in together. The call in information is:

- **Dial-in number:** 877-455-0244
- **Code:** 6681820529

Recommendations:

- **Prevention:** Maine CDC recommends following the “No Flu 4 You” guidelines which include:
 - **Wash your hands:** Both the general public and healthcare providers should remember to wash their hands frequently to prevent transmission of influenza
 - **Cover your cough:** Use tissues, or cough into your sleeve
 - **Stay home when you are sick:** Symptomatic individuals should remain home while sick. Stay home until 24 hours after fever resolves without the use of medications.
 - **Get Vaccinated:** Maine CDC recommends vaccination for everyone aged 6 months and older, especially for those people who are at high risk of serious complications from influenza. Influenza vaccine is provided at no-cost by the state of Maine for children under the age of 19 years. Vaccine is still available through school sponsored vaccine clinics, healthcare providers, and many local pharmacies and offers protection in 14 days. For questions about vaccination please contact the Maine Immunization Program at 800-867-4775 or through immunizeme@maine.gov.
- **Diagnostic Testing:** Maine CDC recommends that healthcare providers consider influenza testing for patients with influenza-like illness (defined as fever greater than 100° F with cough or sore throat, in the absence of another known cause) who are hospitalized, who have died, or for whom a diagnosis of influenza would affect clinical care, infection control, or management of contacts.
- **Treatment:** Tamiflu and Relenza are both approved antivirals for influenza. Treatment should begin as soon as possible. Updated guidance for use of Antivirals for the Treatment and Chemoprophylaxis of Influenza are <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/summary-clinicians.htm>

- **Reporting:** All influenza outbreaks and pediatric influenza deaths are reportable conditions to Maine CDC. Maine CDC also appreciates reports of laboratory confirmed influenza but particularly:
 - **any** laboratory confirmed influenza among hospitalized persons
 - **any** suspicion of influenza among persons who have died
 - **any** laboratory confirmed influenza associated with an outbreak

Reports can be provided to Maine CDC by fax at 207-287-8186 or by phone at 1-800-821-5821. Provider reporting is an essential component of influenza surveillance which is necessary to monitor the magnitude and severity of influenza in the state. Weekly influenza surveillance reports are available at: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/influenza/influenza-surveillance-weekly-updates.shtml>.

For more information:

- Maine CDC's influenza webpage: www.maineclu.gov
- Federal CDC's influenza webpage: www.cdc.gov/flu
- Maine's weekly surveillance reports: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/influenza/influenza-surveillance-weekly-updates.shtml>